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ABSTRACT

In an exploration of customizing the Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science (MFATPS), developed by the Educational Testing Service, a questionnaire was sent to the heads of political science and joint departments which offer a bachelor's degree in Political Science. A total of 1,017 departments were surveyed in January 1990; 293 department heads (29%) responded. The three alternative customization approaches presented were: (1) use of the present MFATPS; (2) the current test plus three optional modules in subareas of United States politics; and (3) a revised multiple-choice test plus four supplemental modules. Respondents were asked to state which alternative was preferable, how much use could be expected, and what developmental work might be required. Results do not clearly support the need for or attractiveness of either of the customization models, suggesting retention of the present test. Eighteen tables illustrate the sample and responses. Twelve appendices provide supplemental information, largely concerning the conduct of the survey. (SLD)

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FINAL REPORT

SURVEY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT CHAIRS ON THE EXPLORATION OF THE CUSTOMIZATION OF THE MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

USDE/FIPSE GRANT# G008730455

May, 1990

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SAMPLE RESPONDING	2
ARE THE CUSTOMIZATION ALTERNATIVES MORE ATTRACTIVE?	3
WHICH OF THE TWO CUSTOMIZATION MODULES IS MOST ATTRACTIVE?	4
WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ALTERNATIVES?	4
WHAT LEVEL OF USE COULD BE EXPECTED FOR CUSTOMIZATION MODULES?	5
SHOULD A CUSTOMIZED POLITICAL SCIENCE ALTERNATIVE BE DEVELOPED?	6
CONCLUSION	7

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT 1	COMPARISON OF SAMPLE WITH POPULATION
EXHIBIT 2	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 1988-89
EXHIBIT 3	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION OFFERED
EXHIBIT 4	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED
EXHIBIT 5	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY CURRENTLY ENGAGEMENT IN FORMAL ASSESSMENT
EXHIBIT 6	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS ASSESSING BY TYPE OF ASSESSMENT
EXHIBIT 7	DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS ASSESSING BY INTENTION TO BEGIN ASSESSMENT WITHIN TWO YEARS
EXHIBIT 8	INDEPENDENT COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES BY TOTAL AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION--OVERALL REACTION TO ALTERNATIVES
EXHIBIT 9	INDEPENDENT COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES BY TOTAL AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION--LIKELIHOOD OF USE
EXHIBIT 10	DIRECT COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES
EXHIBIT 11	INDEPENDENT COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION--PRINCIPLE ADVANTAGES
EXHIBIT 12	INDEPENDENT COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION--PRINCIPLE LIMITATIONS
EXHIBIT 13	DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONS BY WHICH ADDITIONAL MODULES WOULD BE USED--OPTIONAL MODULES AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE (2)
EXHIBIT 14	DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONS BY WHICH ADDITIONAL MODULES WOULD BE USED--U. S. POLITICS FOCUS ALTERNATIVE (3)
EXHIBIT 15	PROJECTED VOLUME OF SAMPLE BASED ON PREFERENCE AMONG ALTERNATIVES IF ASSESSING MAJOR--INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS
EXHIBIT 16	EXTENT OF USE OF ASSESSMENT APPROACH OF THOSE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN ASSESSMENT
EXHIBIT 17	EXTENT OF PROJECTED TOTAL FUTURE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY
EXHIBIT 18	PROJECTED VOLUME OF SAMPLE BASED ON PREFERENCE AMONG ALTERNATIVES IF ASSESSING MAJORS--INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
APPENDIX B	SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
APPENDIX C	APSA COVER LETTER
APPENDIX D	SURVEY RESPONDENT DEPARTMENTS
APPENDIX E	OTHER UNDERGRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE SPECIALTIES
APPENDIX F	OTHER FORMS OF ASSESSING UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS
APPENDIX G	OTHER PRINCIPAL ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVES
APPENDIX H	OTHER MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF ALTERNATIVES
APPENDIX I	PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALTERNATIVES
APPENDIX J	OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT
APPENDIX K	OTHER MEANS OF ASSESSING MAJORS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
APPENDIX L	REASONS FOR LIKELIHOOD OF USE

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INTRODUCTION

The proposal approved by the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education called for the "exploration of the customization of the Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science". The project planned to explore three issues: User Needs; Technical Issues; and, Practical/Operational Issues. The first of these was to be considered through mini-conferences (one was held at the Southern Political Science Association meeting in Memphis) and a survey, built upon input from the mini-conferences, of department chairs. The carrying out of the other two aspects of the project was dependent on the results of the survey. Only "if the results of the meetings and the survey are positive in support of one of the models" would ETS move to implement the model on an experimental basis.

Because of limitations in the extent of pretest populations and, hence, items available for use in alternative approaches and time constraints, it was necessary to modify the proposal somewhat. This was done through discussions with FIPSE staff and documented in a revised plan dated October 24, 1989. That plan reduced the number of mini-conferences from four to two (only one was actually held due to limited participation by attendees at the Southern Association meeting) and the limited the alternatives that could be considered. Other aspects of the original proposal remained in place.

Three Alternatives Customization approaches were discussed in the mini-conference. They were:

1. Current Major Field Political Science Test with Optional Modules Available.

   The available item bank would be used to create three 30-minute modules in subareas of United States politics. Institutions could add one or two additional modules to the current Major Field Achievement Test for an additional fee and receive the current score reports plus scores on whatever modules were also administered.

2. A Revised Major Field Test in Political Science to be a United States Politics Test with Choice of Additional Modules.

   The available items would be used in combination with the existing Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science to create a 90-minute, 90-item multiple-choice major field test in United States Politics. Four additional modules, covering non-U.S. politics material, would be created from the existing Political Science test and offered as a supplement to the U.S. Politics test.

3. Publish the Available Item Bank in a Booklet That Faculty Could Use to Create Optional Modules of Their Choice.

   Institutions would use the published items to select and print up to 50 items in a module which could be given with the existing Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science. In addition to scores on the Major Field test, item analysis results would be reported on the module items.

The mini-conference participants had a decided preference for the present test over any of the alternatives. However, the last of these alternatives was so thoroughly rejected in the mini-conference as to be excluded from consideration in drafting the survey. See Appendix A for a summary of the mini-conference and a list of participants.

A questionnaire was drafted that presented the other two alternatives plus the present Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science for consideration. It also asked background questions and questions about strengths and weaknesses of each alternative. The questionnaire was reviewed by ETS staff, Dr. Shelia Mann of the American Political Science Association and the FIPSE Contract Officer, Dr. Constance Cook. It was field tested with four department chairs at different types of institutions. A final version of the questionnaire was finally established and printed. See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire that was sent.

In January, 1990 the questionnaire was mailed, along with a cover letter from the Executive Director of the APSA, Dr. Catherine E. Rudder, to the heads of Political Science departments and joint departments offering a bachelors in Political Science. (See Appendix C for a copy of the cover letter.) A total of 1,017 departments were surveyed. A follow-up mailing was made to all departments that had not responded by the initial deadline of January 22. Data were analyzed from 293 departments or 29% of the total population. Appendix D lists the departments responding by APSA type classification.

The key question the survey sought to answer is:

> whether one or both customization alternatives would be more attractive to users than the existing, non-customized Major Field Test in Political Science? If not, that would raise a serious question as to the desirability of developing the customized version?

A second question is:

> which of the two customization alternatives is most attractive to users.

A third question is:

> how much actual use might be expected for each of the customized alternatives? Would this use be sufficient to support the technical analysis necessary to make the customization professionally acceptable, and keep the cost of operating the customized options realistic?

Finally:

> what information does the survey provide that can help shape any further developmental work?

This report presents a description of the sample who returned questionnaires. It then addresses the key questions raised by the questionnaire. Finally, information about detailed reactions to the three alternatives is presented. The report closes with a set of conclusions.

SAMPLE RESPONDING

The comparison of the sample to the population in terms of types of departments is shown in Exhibit 1. A chi-square analysis indicates that significant differences exist between the two distributions. Hence, in terms of type of institution, the sample is not representative of the total population; it is weighted toward institutions that award a Ph.D. or M.A. degree and under-represented by joint departments awarding BA degrees. The results from the sample cannot be directly applied to the population in terms of projections. In addition, we cannot assume that those who did not return the questionnaire would have responded in a fashion similar to those who did, e.g., the non-respondents may well have lower interest in the whole area of assessment, or a major field test, and did not bother to return the questionnaire.

Exhibit 2 shows a distribution of number of graduates per departments by total and type of department. Larger departments (26 or more graduates per year) made up almost half of the departments responding (47%). As would be expected the Ph.D. and Master's departments tend to be larger.

No department offers all the specialties available; over half offer American Government and International Relations. A significant percentage, 32%, offer no specialization. (See Exhibit 3.) Specialties other than those listed that are offered by departments are listed in Appendix E.

A bachelors degree was the highest degree awarded in 60% of the institutions responding. There was some inconsistency in reporting, e.g., Ph.D. departments indicating the bachelors degree as the highest degree awarded, suggesting either some change in the nature of the department or a misunderstanding of the question. (See Exhibit 4.)

Slightly less than 30% of the departments report currently being involved in formal assessment of majors in Political Science. The percentages are fairly consistent across types of institutions. (See Exhibit 5.)

Of those currently doing assessment, the Senior Thesis and/or Project was the most common type of assessment (42%) followed by Other (29%) and the Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science (24%). There were some sharp differences by type of institution; no Ph.D. granting institutions used the Major Field test and only 17% used Senior Thesis/Projects, while 40% of the Master's Degree departments used the Major Field Test and 20% Senior Thesis/Project. For separate departments with bachelors degree highest, 26% used the Major Field test while 61% used a Senior Thesis/Project. The most frequently cited "other" assessment methods was a senior seminar/alumni questionnaire (6). (See Exhibit 6 and, for a full listing of other assessment methods identified, Appendix F.)

Less than a third of the departments not now engaged in assessment feel they will be undertaking such assessment within the next two years. However, almost as many departments are uncertain about assessment plans (29% vs 27%). More Ph.D. and Masters departments anticipate moving to assessment than bachelors departments. (See Exhibit 7.)

ARE THE CUSTOMIZATION ALTERNATIVES MORE ATTRACTIVE?

Alternative 1--the current Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science--is clearly more attractive and more popular than either of the "customized" alternatives, both when considered independently, i.e., only in terms of the particular alternative, and comparative.

When asked to give a reaction to each alternative, the responses from all institutions responding was:

Alternative	Positive (Excellent and Very Good)	Negative (Very Poor and Poor)
Current Test	48%	22%
Optional Additional Module	27%	31%
U.S.Politics Focus w/ Additional Modules	24%	37%

These preferences, with some differences in degree, held when the data were looked at by type of institution. No institutional group preferred either customization option over the current test. (See Exhibit 8.)

In terms of likelihood of use of each alternative, the current test would be much more widely used than either customized option. The responses from all institutions responding to how likely they would be to use the alternative were:

Alternative	Definitely Use/ Probably Use	Probably Not/ Definitely Not Use
Current Test	33%	34%
Optional Additional Module	15%	48%
U.S.Politics Focus w/ Additional Modules	15%	54%

Again, the pattern held for all types of institutions. (See Exhibit 9.)

Viewed on a comparative basis, i.e, when asked to rate one alternative in relation to the other two, over twice as many institutions chose the current test first over each of the alternatives (131 vs 57 and 43). When asked if they needed to assess their majors which alternative they would use, 34% would use the current alternative vs. 17% alternative 2 and 8% alternative 3. Results by type of institution were similar. (See Exhibit 10.)

WHICH OF THE TWO CUSTOMIZATION MODULES IS MOST ATTRACTIVE?

In comparing the two alternatives, overall the respondents showed considerably more interest in the optional additional module than in the restructured U.S. Politics-Focused test with additional U.S. Politics modules. However, there were some differences by type of department. If continued consideration were to be given to any customization alternative, additional optional modules would be the alternative of choice. (See Exhibits 8 - 10.)

WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ALTERNATIVES?

Survey respondents were asked, for each alternative to identify the principle advantages and disadvantages of the alternative. The principle advantages of the current Major Field test in Political Science were the content coverage (28%), the availability of full comparative data (21%) and the time required (17%). These continued to be the three most frequently identified advantages for Ph.D. and Master's departments, with different percentages, but for bachelor's departments and joint department's availability of the 50-locally written questions replaced the time required in the top three. Only a few responded to the "Other" option. (See Exhibit 11 and Appendix G.)

The principle limitations identified for the Major Field alternative were, cost (26%), content coverage (22%), lack of additional content modules (12%), and other (12%). The most frequently identified limitation other was multiple-choice test/not essay examination (17 departments). These were the choices across types of departments as well. (See Exhibit 12 and Appendix H.)

When asked to identify what they would like to see changed or added to the current Major Field test, the most frequent responses were: reduce time/cost (9 departments), needs essay questions (6 departments), more international relations questions (6 departments), and other tests, e.g. public administration (5 departments). (See Appendix I.)

For the additional optional modules alternative, additional content coverage (29%) and the choice of modules (22%) were the most frequently chosen advantages. These were the most popular advantages across types of departments as well with some differences in the percentage choosing each advantage. (See Exhibit 11 and Appendix G.)

The most frequently cited limitations for the additional optional modules were, cost (19%), choice of modules (17%), other (13%), and extent of modules (10%). These were the same for the different types of departments with differences in ordering of the limitations. The most frequently cited "other" limitations were multiple-choice format (9 departments) and focus on U. S. politics (7 departments). (See Exhibit 12 and Appendix H.)

Departments were asked which of the additional modules that would be made available they would most likely use. Institutions, policies and process would be the most frequently selected (41%) followed by constitutional law/judicial process (37%), and none of these (22%). This order held across the different types of departments. (See Exhibit 13.)

The most frequently identified change or addition to the additional optional modules alternative were: modules with a comparative politics/international relations emphasis (8 departments); and, public administration (8 departments). (See Appendix I.)

The most frequently chosen advantage for the U.S. Politics Focus with additional modules were coverage of modules (17%), choice of modules (16%), and focus on U. S. Politics (15%). These were the most popular advantages across types of departments with some differences in percentage choosing each advantage. (See Exhibit 11 and Appendix G.)

The focus on U. S. politics (225) and cost (17%) were the most frequently identified limitations for the U. S. Politics focus with additional modules. These were consistent across types of departments. (See Exhibit 12 and Appendix H.)

Departments were asked which of the additional modules available under the U.S. politics focus alternative they would choose. The most popular options were: international relations (51%); comparative politics (45%); and, Political Theory and History (37%). These were the top three across types of departments. (See Exhibit 14.)

Adding a module on public administration (6 departments) and adding essay questions (5 departments) were the most cited additions or changes to the U. S. politics focus alternative. (See Appendix I.)

Respondents were asked an open ended question on what other suggestions they had for improving major field assessment in Political Science. The three most frequently identified were: need or add essay (9 departments); offer option of locally generated add-ons (5 departments)--interestingly that option is now available with the current test, as indicated in the description of alternative 1; reduce cost (4 departments). (See Appendix J for full list of suggestions made.)

WHAT LEVEL OF USE COULD BE EXPECTED FOR CUSTOMIZATION MODULES?

If the most popular of the customization alternatives (Optional Modules Available) were to be developed in spite of the limited positive response, how much use would it be likely to attract? Some feel for this question can be obtained by relating several of the questions raised in the survey to one another. If the percentage choosing each alternative to the forced-choice question of which assessment devise the institution would choose <u>if they needed to undertake major field assessment</u> is applied to the number of institutions in the response sample we see that 95 institutions would use the current test, 45 would use alternative 2, and only 24 would use alternative 3. By relating these results to the question on size of department, the projected number of students who would be tested under these conditions would be 3,377 for the current test, 1,495 for the Optional Module alternative and 628 for the U.S. Politics-Focused alternative, all were available. (See Exhibits 10 and 14 and, for a listing of the "other" responses, see Appendix K.)

However, both these numbers and the higher numbers that would be generated by applying the percentage to the number of graduates from all departments, are unrealistically high. They represent the highest volumes possible under the most favorable conditions, not what the volumes are likely to be in the short term. If only the departments currently engaged in formal assessment of the major are used, the projections change dramatically to 788 for the current test, 330 for the Additional Optional Module approach and 58 for the U.S. Politics-Focus alternative. (See Exhibits 16 and 17.)

Even these data are inflated, since the number indicating use of the current test (788) exceeds by 127 (about 20%) the number tested in all institutions in past years. The percentage increase that would result from creating the additional optional module can be applied against volume experience with the present Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science, and more realistic projections obtained. The volume for the present test over the past two years has averaged 661 annually; far below the projected volume generated from analysis of the survey data. By taking the percentage increase reflected for the Additional Optional Module alternative and applying it to this figure we obtain the more realistic volume estimate of 290 students tested for the Optional Modules approach.

This number, even if inflated by 10% to 15% to allow for normal program growth, could not support the technical work required to make the customization alternative professionally acceptable because the volume would be spread over the three optional modules. The survey results indicate that the volume would not be spread evenly across the three modules. Rather, 119 would choose Institutions, Policies, and Process, 35 Political Behavior and 107 Constitutional Law/ Judicial Process. Normally a minimum of at least 250 students per module are required for minimal statistical work on the module in order to report a score.

Respondents were ask, about each alternative, why they responded as they did to the question of likelihood of use. Responses have been complied and are presented in Appendix L by positive, neutral and negative responses to the use question. The most frequent reasons given by those responding positively to the current Major Field alternative were "content coverage" (14) and "comparative data" (9). The most frequent reason given by those responding negatively were, "not appropriate for the curriculum/content coverage problems" (21) and "will not use multiple-choice exam/problems with standardized exams" (24). With regard to the additional optional module alternative, the most frequent responses of those responding positively were: "reflects curriculum better/coverage" (5) and "flexibility" (4). The most frequent responses of those responding negatively were: "too focused on U.S. Politics" (17) and "multiple choice/standardized test" (17). Those responding positively to the U.S. Politics focused test with additional modules gave "focus on U.S. Politics" (6) most frequently as the reason why. Of those responding negatively to this alternative, "too focused on U.S. Politics/too limited and/or narrow" (47) and "multiple choice" (10) were the most frequently given reason.

SHOULD A CUSTOMIZED POLITICAL SCIENCE ALTERNATIVE BE DEVELOPED?

Based on these results, the need for either customized version is not supported. If the assumption that customization is responsive to users (department) needs was to be upheld, one of the customization modules should have been more attractive than the non-customized test and should project more use than the non-customized alternative. Apparently the bulk of the institutions are satisfied, indeed, feel better served by the current Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science than by either of the proposed alternatives. While some additional users might be attracted to a customized alternative, they would be insufficient, in the short term, to support either the operational cost or the technical needs of the customized alternative.

It may be that if some other, more extensive form of customization had been proposed the results might have been different. This, however, was not possible within the constraints of the current project nor is it practical in terms of the cost that would be involved in the operation of the customized program.

Thus, the survey data do not support the creation of a customization alternative in Political Science. While the items and technology exist to create a customized test, it is unlikely that enough users would be available in the first years of use to permit the necessary statistical work to support the reporting of scores on the module. In addition, the volume that would be generated would not justify the cost of the development or its operational expenses.

CONCLUSION

Since the survey results clearly do not support the need for or the attractiveness of either of the customization models, and since the number of cases that would likely result if the customization were created would not support the technical needs of the model, ETS does not feel the project should be carried forward to experimental implementation.

While the outcome of the project is disappointing to both ETS and FIPSE, some valuable knowledge was gained.

1. The cost and difficulty of creating a professional quality item bank, at least in Biology and Political Science for major field assessment purposes are too great to be practical, given current levels of interest of college and university faculty.

2. In spite of frequently heard and logically reasonable appeals for major field assessment measures that can be customized to meet departmental needs, at least in Political Science, the limited customization approaches considered are not as attractive as a uniform approach.

3. If departments of political science are forced to undertake major field assessment, a uniform, standardized test would be the most popular alternative.

4. Without a specific requirement for major field assessment, the number of departments and number of students using a uniform, standardized test remains relatively small in comparison to its potential.

Exhibit 1

Comparison of Sample with Population

Type of institution	Sample		Population	
	N	%	N	%
Ph.D. in Pol. Sci.	45	15%	124	12%
M.A. in Pol. Sci.	59	20%	155	15%
Sept. Dept. B.A.	137	47%	476	47%
Joint Dept. B.A.	52	18%	262	26%
Total	293	100%	1,017	100%

Exhibit 2
DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 1988-89

No. Graduates	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 293		N = 45		N = 59		N = 137		N = 52	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Response	18	6%	0	0%	2	3%	9	7%	7	14%
None	4	1%	1	2%	0	0%	2	2%	1	2%
1- 5	23	8%	0	0%	3	5%	9	7%	11	21%
6-10	37	13%	0	0%	2	3%	20	15%	15	29%
11-15	32	11%	1	2%	3	5%	19	14%	9	17%
16-20	18	6%	0	0%	4	7%	11	8%	3	6%
21-25	23	8%	0	0%	5	9%	16	12%	2	4%
25-50	51	17%	5	11%	14	24%	28	20%	4	8%
51-100	32	11%	6	13%	13	22%	13	10%	0	0%
< 100	55	19%	32	71%	13	22%	10	7%	0	0%
Mean	42 grad.		86 Grad.		54 Grad.		30 Grad.		9 Grad.	

Exhibit 3
DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION OFFERED

Area of Special.	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 293		N = 45		N = 59		N = 137		N = 52	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Amer. Govt.	161	55%	28	62%	36	61%	77	56%	20	39%
International Rel.	161	55%	30	67%	38	64%	77	56%	16	31%
Comparative Pol.	131	45%	30	67%	31	53%	60	44%	10	19%
Political Theory	103	35%	22	49%	29	49%	45	33%	7	14%
Public Admin.	88	30%	15	33%	29	49%	32	23%	12	23%
Public Law	80	27%	14	31%	27	45%	30	22%	9	17%
Public Policy	47	16%	15	33%	13	22%	15	11%	4	8%
Quant./Res. Meth.	15	5%	7	16%	4	7%	2	2%	2	4%
Other (1)	24	6%	5	11%	4	7%	11	8%	4	8%
Other (2)	6	2%	2	4%	1	2%	1	1%	2	4%
Do not Special.	95	32%	13	29%	16	27%	46	34%	20	39%

Exhibit 4
DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED

Area of Special.	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 293		N = 45		N = 59		N = 137		N = 52	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bachelors Degree	176	60%	2	4%	3	6%	128	93%	43	83%
Masters Degree	57	20%	0	0%	54	92%	1	1%	2	4%
Ph.D. Degree	45	15%	43	96%	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%
No Response	15	5%	0	0%	1	2%	7	5%	7	14%

Exhibit 5
DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS BY CURRENTLY
ENGAGEMENT IN FORMAL ASSESSMENT

Engagement	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 293		N = 45		N = 59		N = 137		N = 52	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	85	29%	12	27%	15	25%	43	31%	15	29%
No	189	65%	33	73%	40	68%	88	64%	28	54%
No Response	19	7%	0	9%	4	7%	6	4%	9	17%

Exhibit 6

DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS ASSESSING BY TYPE OF ASSESSMENT

Type Assessment	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 62		N = 4		N = 10		N = 31		N = 13	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dept. M-C Exam	5	6%	0	0%	1	7%	2	5%	2	13%
Dept. Essay Exam.	13	15%	2	17%	1	7%	8	19%	2	13%
Dept. M-C/Essay Ex.	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	20%
MFAT Political S.	20	24%	0	0%	6	40%	11	26%	3	20%
GRE Political S.	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%	0	0%
Sr. Thesis/Project	36	42%	2	17%	3	20%	26	61%	5	33%
Other	25	29%	7	58%	6	40%	8	19%	4	27%

Exhibit 7
DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENTS ASSESSING BY INTENTION
TO BEGIN ASSESSMENT WITHIN TWO YEARS

Begin Assessment	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 231		N = 41		N = 49		N = 106		N = 40	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	86	29%	15	33%	22	37%	36	26%	13	25%
Uncertain	78	27%	9	20%	21	36%	35	26%	13	25%
No	67	23%	17	38%	6	10%	35	26%	9	17%
No Response	62	21%								

Exhibit 8

Independent Comparison of Alternatives By Total and Type of Institution

Overall Reaction to Alternatives

Rating	Total			Type A			Type B			Type C			Type D		
	N = 293			N = 45			N = 59			N = 137			N = 52		
	Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Excel.	9%	5%	4%	0%	2%	0%	12%	3%	2%	7%	5%	6%	17%	8%	6%
V.Good	39%	22%	20%	24%	16%	9%	46%	20%	27%	41%	25%	18%	37%	21%	25%
Neutral	28%	37%	31%	29%	24%	31%	25%	39%	34%	26%	39%	29%	35%	37%	33%
Poor	16%	22%	26%	24%	33%	33%	14%	27%	24%	20%	18%	28%	2%	14%	19%
V.Poor	6%	9%	11%	13%	16%	20%	3%	7%	5%	6%	8%	14%	4%	6%	4%
No Resp.	3%	7%	8%	9%	9%	7%	0%	3%	9%	1%	4%	6%	6%	15%	14%

Exhibit 9

Independent Comparison of Alternatives By Total and Type of Institution

Likelihood of Use

	Total			Type A			Type B			Type C			Type D		
	N = 293			N = 45			N = 59			N = 137			N = 52		
Likelih.	Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Definitely	6%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	5%	0%	2%	8%	6%	0%
Probably	27%	14%	14%	13%	11%	4%	36%	10%	20%	29%	17%	14%	27%	12%	15%
Might/MNot	31%	31%	25%	29%	24%	24%	29%	34%	27%	30%	32%	22%	37%	31%	31%
Prob. Not	21%	31%	37%	29%	31%	38%	15%	34%	37%	23%	34%	38%	14%	23%	31%
Defin.Not	13%	17%	17%	24%	27%	31%	10%	15%	5%	12%	16%	20%	12%	15%	10%
No Resp.	2%	6%	7%	4%	7%	2%	0%	7%	10%	2%	2%	4%	4%	14%	14%

Exhibit 10

Direct Comparison of Alternatives

Total N = 293

Number and Percentage choosing each Alternative First by Total and Type

Alternatives	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alternative 1	131	45%	16	36%	33	56%	60	44%	22	42%
Alternative 2	57	20%	8	18%	8	14%	32	23%	9	17%
Alternative 3	43	15%	8	18%	10	17%	18	13%	7	14%
No Response	62	21%	13	29%	8	14%	27	20%	14	27%

Selection of Alternative by Total and Type Institution

	Total	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D
Alt 1	34%	18%	44%	36%	35%
Alt 2	17%	7%	14%	20%	19%
Alt 3	8%	4%	8%	7%	13%
Own Test	16%	16%	19%	18%	8%
Other	10%	31%	9%	6%	6%
No Response	15%	24%	8%	13%	19%

Exhibit 11
Independent Comparison of Alternatives By Type of Institution

Principle Advantage
Percent Selecting Each Advantage

	Total			Type A			Type B			Type C			Type D		
	N = 293			N = 45			N = 59			N = 137			N = 52		
Advantage	Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
TimeReq.	17%	9%	9%	11%	11%	9%	7%	5%	4%	4%	2%	2%	6%	4%	4%
Cost	3%	2%	1%	4%	0%	2%	2%	5%	0%	2%	1%	2%	4%	2%	0%
ContentCov.	28%	--	--	13%	--	--	34%	--	--	26%	--	--	39%	--	--
AddContCov.	--	29%	--	--	27%	--	--	29%	--	--	29%	--	--	35%	--
Cov.ofMod.	--	--	17%	--	--	18%	--	--	19%	--	--	18%	--	--	12%
ChoiceMod.	--	22%	16%	--	13%	18%	--	19%	24%	--	30%	15%	--	14%	15%
AddItemOpt.	11%	--	--	9%	--	--	9%	--	--	12%	--	--	10%	--	--
FocusUSPol	--	--	15%	--	--	11%	--	--	5%	--	--	15%	--	--	29%
FullCompD.	21%	--	--	22%	--	--	29%	--	--	20%	--	--	12%	--	--
Other	3%	5%	5%	2%	4%	2%	0%	3%	3%	5%	6%	7%	4%	6%	4%
No Response	28%	37%	41%	38%	44%	47%	17%	36%	41%	31%	34%	41%	27%	40%	39%

Exhibit 12

Independent Comparison of Alternatives by Type of Institution
Principle Limitation
Percent Selecting Each Limitation

	Total			Type A			Type B			Type C			Type D		
	N = 293			N = 45			N = 59			N = 137			N = 52		
DisAdvant.	Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative			Alternative		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
TimeReq.	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%	0%	2%	4%
Cost	26%	19%	17%	18%	13%	16%	37%	27%	22%	25%	16%	15%			
ContentCov.	22%	--	--	20%	--	--	24%	--	--	23%	--	--	19%	--	--
LackAddMod.	12%	--	--	11%	--	--	12%	--	--	12%	--	--	14%	--	--
ExtModules	--	10%	--	--	2%	--	--	12%	--	--	11%	--	--	10%	--
ChoiceMod.	--	17%	--	--	13%	--	--	20%	--	--	20%	--	--	10%	--
CovModules	--	--	8%	--	--	4%	--	--	12%	--	--	6%	--	--	10%
FocusUSPol.	--	--	22%	--	--	29%	--	--	22%	--	--	22%	--	--	17%
LimCompData	--	6%	--	--	2%	--	--	7%	--	--	7%	--	--	8%	--
LackCompData	--	--	9%	--	--	2%	--	--	9%	--	--	11%	--	--	12%
Other	12%	13%	7%	18%	20%	7%	7%	14%	3%	11%	10%	7%	15%	17%	8%
NoResponse	25%	32%	35%	29%	44%	40%	17%	19%	31%	26%	33%	36%	27%	33%	31%

Exhibit 13
DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONS BY WHICH ADDITIONAL MODULES WOULD BE USED
OPTIONAL MODULES AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE (2)

Additional Modules	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 231		N = 41		N = 49		N = 106		N = 40	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Instit. Pol. & Proc.	121	41%	21	47%	19	32%	63	45%	18	35%
Political Behavior	34	12%	6	13%	11	19%	10	7%	7	14%
Const. Law/Jud. Proc.	109	37%	10	22%	16	27%	62	45%	21	40%
None of These	64	22%	9	20%	16	27%	30	22%	9	17%

Exhibit 14
DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONS BY WHICH ADDITIONAL MODULES WOULD BE USED
U.S. POLITICS FOCUS ALTERNATIVE (2)

Additional Modules	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 231		N = 41		N = 49		N = 106		N = 40	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Comparative Pol.	132	45%	19	42%	31	53%	63	46%	19	37%
Pol.Theory & Hist.	107	37%	15	33%	26	44%	52	38%	14	27%
Internatl. Rel.	148	51%	18	40%	33	56%	75	55%	22	42%
Methodology	30	10%	4	9%	12	20%	11	8%	3	6%
None	37	13%	7	16%	7	12%	14	10%	9	17%

Exhibit 15

Projected Volume of Sample Based on Preference Among Alternatives If Assessing Major-Institutions and Students

Alternative	Projected Volume	
	Institutions	Students
Alternative 1	95	3,377
Alternative 2	45	1,495
Alternative 3	24	628
Other	73	3,848

Exhibit 16

EXTENT OF USE OF ASSESSMENT APPROACH OF THOSE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN ASSESSMENT

	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 85		N = 12		N = 15		N = 43		N = 15	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dept. M-C Exam	5	6%	0	0%	1	7%	2	5%	2	13%
Dept. Essay	13	15%	2	17%	1	7%	8	19%	2	13%
Dept. M-C/Essay	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	20%
MFAT Political S.	20	24%	0	0%	6	40%	11	26%	3	20%
GRE Subject Test	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%	0	0%
Senior Thesis/ Project	36	42%	2	17%	3	20%	26	61%	5	33%
Other	25	29%	7	58%	6	40%	8	19%	4	27%

Exhibit 17

EXTENT OF PROJECTED TOTAL FUTURE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

PLANNED FUTURE ASSESSMENT	Total		Type A		Type B		Type C		Type D	
	N = 186		N = 12		N = 15		N = 43		N = 15	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Plan Assessment W/I Next Two Years	2296	27%	776	27%	732	31%	504	23%	52	25%
Uncertain	2774	33%	1590	54%	1140	48%	500	23%	106	51%
No Plans	3290	39%	552	19%	476	20%	1173	54%	51	24%

Exhibit 18

Projected Volume of Sample Based on Preference Among Alternatives If Assessing Major-Institutions and Students
(For those institutions currently engaged in formal assessment)

Alternative	Projected Volume	
	Institutions	Students
Alternative 1	30	788
Alternative 2	12	330
Alternative 3	6	58
Other	24	1,036

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE ON FIPSE PROJECT-EXPLORING THE CUSTOMIZATION OF MAJOR FIELD TESTS

Following a meeting with FIPSE staff on October 20, department chairs scheduled to attend the Southern Political Science Association conference were identified. Initially, 40 chairs were identified. However, upon calling a number of these were either no longer the chair (in some cases the new chair was attending and was identified) or were not planning to attend. Of those contacted, 11 agreed to meet with on Thursday evening, November 2. None were available for a Friday meeting. Of those 11, seven showed up. Those who agreed and those who attended are identified on the attached Exhibit A-1. The bulk of those attending were from public institutions of moderate size; the largest were University of Georgia and Old Dominion. Only Old Dominion was a Political Science Major Field Achievement Test user. Those agreeing to attend were sent a letter explaining the purpose, identifying the time and place of the meeting and a copy of the latest Major Field Achievement Test brochure as background.

While the participants ate, the Project Director, Dr. Richard Burns, made a presentation that covered the following:

- Purpose of the meeting
- Background on the Assessment Movement in higher education
- Description of the first two years of the FIPSE Item Bank Project
- Description and purpose of the current project
- Description of the Major Field Achievement Testing Program
- Description of the Major Field test in Political Science
- Description of the FIPSE Political Science Item Bank Status

During and following the presentation questions from the participants were responded to. This discussion showed a wide degree of experience with and interest in assessment in the major. Several were very interested and current facing the problem. Others had given little thought to it. The most negative to the idea throughout the meeting came up to the Project Director as he was leaving and said he had learned a great deal which he was likely to need in the future. There was general agreement that faculty interest in such assessment was quite low, even where it was being mandated. There was also agreement that it wasn't likely to take place without external pressures, i.e., the faculty were not going to do it for their own purposes.

When everyone seemed to be relatively clear on the background, the Project Director presented the alternatives individually and raised questions about each before going on to the next. The alternatives and a summary of the major points raised in reaction to each are summarized below.

- Augmented Optional Model and Student Choice (see Exhibit 2 & 3).

  The overall reaction was generally negative to this concept. It was seen as a possible way to overcome laziness on the part of faculty but severely limited by the choice of options. When asked if going to do assessment of the major they would use none, one or two optional modules, all indicated they would use none of them. They would stick with the basic Major Field test. Making additional modules in other areas of Political Science would make it more attractive. While some choice was seen as positive (even if they wouldn't use it), the small number of modules available and their limitation to U.S. Government was seen as a major drawback. Some felt that the initial lack of comparative data on the module could be an advantage. Giving the students a choice of options was not seen as a strong enhancement to this alternative and did not change any views about its attractiveness. There was a general feeling that departments would choose the easiest, lest costly and most direct approach, i.e., the existing test.

- Revised Major Field Test with Alternative Modules (see Exhibit 4).

  This alternative was less popular than the first, primarily because of the U.S. Government emphasis that it would, by necessity, carry. There was a general feeling that "faculty would revolt" at a test whose emphasis was U.S. Government since many already feel there is a bias toward U.S. Government. In addition, the data resulting from such a test would be likely to produce biased data at many institutions since the better students do not specialize in U.S. Government. This option could be made attractive if there were enough separate modules so that institutions could structure their own test entirely. (Item pool limitations are such that it would not be possible to construct such a test.) However, it was recognized that this would suffer from a lack of comparative data. None of those present would choose this alternative, if it were available, in lieu of the present Major Field test in Political Science.

- Department Creation of Optional Modules from Printed Item Pool (see Exhibit 5).

  This alternative was seen as "totally useless". (The reaction of the Chair's to this alternative was very similar to Connie Cook's.) The lack of item security, comparative data and feed-back were seen as major draw-backs. Something similar is already available by 14 sub-discipline of Political Science from ARNO Press and it is not widely used. Since this approach would again be limited to U.S. Government, it would be even less useful. No one would choose to use this alternative if it were available.

The overall judgement of the group was that none of the options were as good as using the current Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science.

It must, of course, be remembered that this represents only the reactions and judgements of an available set of a few Department chairs. There is no certainty that a different group would have reacted the same. Indeed, their negative reaction to the focus of the item bank and hence the alternatives on U.S. Government was not shared by the "Design Committee" that formulated the Political Science item bank structure.

Because of the basically negative reaction, not much was learned from the discussion which would change the shape of the alternatives. It is not clear that a second or third group would provide more useful information. Because of the difficulty in getting another group soon (there are no more regional meetings until spring) and reservations about the likely results, moving to carry out the survey now seems appropriate.

Because of the strong reaction from the group to the idea of publishing the item pool and making it available for use and the psychometric limitations of such an approach, and to simplify the survey, it will focus on three alternatives:

- The present Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science (for base line purposes).
- Augmented Optional Model
- Revised Major Field Test with Alternative Modules

Exhibit A-1

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING FIPSE PROJECT DISCUSSION OF EXPLORING THE CUSTOMIZATION OF MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Dr. Glen T. Broach
Department Chair
Winthrop College
Political Science Department
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Professor Clarke E. Cochran *
Department Chair
Texas Tech University
Political Science Department
Lubbock, TX 79409

Professor Eldon Eisenach *
Department Chair
University of Tulsa
Political Science Department
600 South College Avenue
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Professor Bahram Farzanegan *
Department Chair
University of North Carolina-Asheville
Political Science
One University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804-3299

Professor Lawrence J. Hanks
Department Chair
Tuskegee University
Political Science Department
Tuskegee Institute, AL 36088

Professor Ronald M. Labbe *
Department Chair
University of Southwestern Louisiana
Political Science Department
Box 4 1652
Fafayette, LA 70505

Dr. Thomas P. Lauth *
Department Chair
University of Georgia
Political Science Department
Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602

Professor Connie P. Mauney
Department Chair
Emporia State University
Political Science Department
Emporia, KS 66801

Professor Robert H. Swansbrough
Department Chair
University of Tennessee - Chattanooga
Political Science Department
615 McCallie Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37403

Professor Mary Ann Tetreault *
Department Chair
Old Dominion University
Political Science & Geography
Norfolk, VA 23508

Professor Donald T. Wells *
Department Chair
West Georgia College
Political Science Department
Carrollton, GA 30118

* Participants who attended the scheduled session on November 2.

Exhibit A-2

MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST CUSTOMIZATION PROJECT

POLITICAL SCIENCE-ALTERNATIVE ONE
AUGMENTED MAJOR FIELD TEST

- USE FIFTY-ITEM OPTIONAL QUESTION PROVISION OF CURRENT TEST.
- INSTITUTION SELECTS ONE OR TWO OF UP TO THREE MODULES TO ADMINISTER TO ALL STUDENTS IN ADDITION TO FULL MAJOR FIELD TEST OR STUDENT SELECTS
  - O CONSTITUTIONAL LAW/JUDICIAL PROCESS
  - O POLITICAL BEHAVIOR
  - O INSTITUTIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCESSES
- TEST WOULD NOW BE:
  - O 120 MINUTES WITH NO ADDITIONAL MODULES
  - O 150 MINUTES WITH ONE ADDITIONAL MODULE
  - O 180 MINUTES WITH TWO ADDITIONAL
- WOULD YIELD:
  - O SAME DATA AS REGULAR MAJOR FIELD TEST,
  - O ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT INDICATOR FOR EACH MODULE CHOSEN
- INSTITUTIONS WOULD PAY AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR EACH MODULE USED ON A PER STUDENT TESTED BASIS
- COMPARATIVE DATA WOULD BE LIMITED AT FIRST

Exhibit A-3

MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST CUSTOMIZATION PROJECT

POLITICAL SCIENCE-ALTERNATIVE ONE-A

AUGMENTED MAJOR FIELD TEST-STUDENT CHOICE

- **SAME AS ALTERNATIVE ONE, EXCEPT:**

  - **INSTITUTIONS OFFER ALL MODULES AND STUDENTS CHOOSE WHICH OF OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL MODULES TO TAKE**

  - **GROUP INFORMATION WOULD BE OF LESS USE UNLESS DEPARTMENT WAS LARGE DUE TO THE SMALL SAMPLE SIZES RESULTING FROM DIFFERENT MODULES TAKEN BY STUDENT**

  - **WOULD COST MORE THAT ALTERNATIVE ONE**

Exhibit A-4

MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST CUSTOMIZATION PROJECT

POLITICAL SCIENCE-ALTERNATIVE TWO

REVISED MAJOR FIELD TEST WITH ALTERNATIVE MODULES

- CURRENT MAJOR FIELD TEST WOULD BE CHANGED TO A U. S. GOVERNMENT POLITICAL SCIENCE TEST BY REMOVING ALL BUT U.S. GOVERNMENT ITEMS FROM CURRENT TEST AND ADDING U. S. GOVERNMENT ITEMS FROM POOL. TEST WOULD BE 90 MINUTES LONG.
- INSTITUTIONS COULD THEN ADD ONE MODULE FROM CURRENT MAJOR FIELD TEST AND STAY UNDER TWO HOURS OR ADD UP TO TWO ADDITIONAL MODULES AND ADDITIONAL TIME.
- MAJOR FIELD RESULTS WOULD NOT BE COMPARABLE WITH EXISTING MAJOR FIELD SCORES.
- CURRENT TEST WOULD ALSO BE OFFERED SO USE OF CURRENT TEST WOULD DETERMINE EXTENT OF COMPARATIVE DATA
- COMPARATIVE DATA COULD BE LIMITED DEPENDING ON OPTIONS CHOSEN--COMPARATIVE DATA WOULD BE BY MODULE
- ALL ALTERNATIVES MODULES PRINTED IN TEST BOOK AS MODULES
- COSTS TO INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE HIGHER

Exhibit A-5

MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST CUSTOMIZATION PROJECT

POLITICAL SCIENCE-ALTERNATIVE THREE

DEPARTMENT CREATION OF OPTIONAL MODULE FROM PRINTED ITEM POOL

- THE 200 AVAILABLE ITEMS WOULD BE PUBLISHED IN A BOOKLET AND MADE AVAILABLE TO MAJOR FIELD ACHIEVEMENT TEST USERS THAT WANTED TO CREATE OPTIONAL MODULE(S).

- INSTITUTIONS WOULD SELECT ITEMS FROM BOOKLET AND PRINT UP OPTIONAL MODULE OR MODULES FOR ADMINISTRATION WITH CURRENT MAJOR FIELD TEST.

- ETS WOULD SCORE AND REPORT BASIC MAJOR FIELD TEST RESULTS PLUS PROVIDE ITEM ANALYSIS DATA ON OPTIONAL MATERIAL PLUS DISKETTE OF ITEM RESPONSES.

- NO COMPARATIVE DATA COULD BE PROVIDED FOR OPTIONAL MODULES.

- TESTING TIME WOULD BE INCREASED TO 150 OR 180 MINUTES.

- ADDITIONAL COST TO INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE MINIMAL.

- ITEM POOL WOULD BE EXPOSED AND MODULE COULD BE TAUGHT TO IF INSTITUTIONS WISHED TO DO SO

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
FIPSE/ETS EXPLORATION OF CUSTOMIZATION OF MAJOR FIELD TEST IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Background. Educational Testing Service, aware of the pressure departments are under from states and accreditation agencies to assess learning of students in their majors, developed, with the Graduate Record Examinations Board, the Major Field Achievement Tests in 1987-88. The Major Field Achievement Tests are shorter, less difficult versions of the GRE Subject Tests. They are also more closely related to the undergraduate curriculum and can be administered directly by departments in 15 fields. In addition to an individual total score (and for six examinations, individual subscores) most tests also provide group data on the subareas covered by the test. These data are called "Assessment Indicators" and are presented in the form of the mean percent correct for that subarea for the group of students tested within a department.

Recognizing that this type of standardized, national test could not meet the needs of all departments, ETS obtained a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant to try to develop item (question) banks in several fields, which could be made available, via a personal computer program, with which departments could construct end-of-major examinations that reflected their particular curricula. However, after two years of work to try to develop such banks in several fields, including political science, we found that the cost and complexities involved made it impossible to accomplish. With the encouragement of FIPSE and the American Political Science Association, we are currently trying to determine if the items developed for the political science item bank could meet departments' needs if they were offered in a way that would permit some customization of the Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science.

This survey is an effort to gather information about the extent of the need for such customization and the degree of interest there might be in several alternative ways of structuring it.

Directions. Please review, one at a time, each of three alternative approaches to major field assessment and then respond to questions about each. Background questions, designed to help analyze the data, are asked at the end of the questionnaire.

Please mark the answer that most closely reflects your views as chairman of the political science department at your institution or provide a brief response where appropriate. It is not necessary to poll or otherwise consult members of your faculty. When completed, the questionnaire should be returned to ETS in the prepaid envelope provided. We would appreciate receiving the completed questionnaire by January 22. If you have questions about any aspect of the questionnaire, please feel free to call.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in completing the questionnaire.

Richard L. Burns
Senior Development Leader
Educational Testing Service
(609-243-8087)

Identification data:

Institution Name _____

City and State _____

Alternative 1. Current Major Field Test in Political Science

In this alternative, the Major Field Test in Political Science, as it currently exists would be available for use without further intervention by ETS. This is a two-hour test consisting of 118 multiple-choice items that yields total score and Assessment Indicators (see cover sheet) for the group of students tested within a department. The Political Science Assessment Indicators are: U.S. Government (39); Comparative Political Systems (27); International Relations (15); Political Theory and the History of Political Thought (24); and Methodology (13). (The numbers in parenthesis are the number of items devoted to each topic.) Comparative data, made up of aggregated data from all using departments, are available. There is a provision for departments to write up to an additional 50 multiple-choice items, which are scored and reported along with the standardized test scores. The price for the Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science is $14 per student tested.

A.1. As a department chair, what is your overall reaction to this approach to major field assessment? (CHECK ONLY ONE.)

_____ Excellent _____ Poor

_____ Very Good _____ Very Poor

_____ Neutral

A.2. How likely would your department be to use this test if you were going to assess majors in political science? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Definitely will or now using it _____ Probably would not use.

_____ Probably would use. _____ Definitely will not use it.

_____ Might or might not use.

A.2a. Why? _____

_____

A.3. What is the principal advantage of Alternative 1? (CHECK ONLY ONE) _____ Time Required

_____ Cost _____ Content Coverage _____ Additional Item Option

_____ Full Comparative Data Other_____

A.4. What is the major limitation of Alternative 1? (CHECK ONLY ONE) _____ Time Required

_____ Cost _____ Content Coverage _____ Lack of Additional Content Modules

_____ Other _____

A.5. What would you like to see changed or added to Alternative 1?

_____

_____

_____

Alternative 3. **Major Field Test in Political Science Revised to be United States Politics Test with Choice of Additional Modules.**

This alternative would use the questions from the item bank and from the current Major Field Test in Political Science to create a 90-minute, 90 multiple-choice item major field test in United States Politics. It would be made available as an alternative to the current Major Field Test (as describe in Alternative 1). The following modules would be available to supplement the United States Politics Major Field Test: 1) Comparative Political Science (30-minute module); 2) Political Theory and History of Political Thought (30-minute module); 3)International Relations (15-minute module); and, 4) Methodology (15-minute module). Departments choosing to use the 90-minute United States Politics test would choose either one 30-minute module or two 15-minute modules to be administered within the two hour time period for the $14 price. Additional modules can be given at an additional charge of $3 per thirty minutes of additional testing time. A total United States Politics score would be reported plus an Assessment Indicators (see Cover Sheet) for each module selected. Limited comparative data would be available on the total score for the first year, with more complete data becoming available after subsequent use.

C.1. **As a department chair, what is your overall reaction to this approach to major field assessment? (CHECK ONLY ONE)**

_____ **Excellent** _____ **Poor**

_____ **Very Good** _____ **Very Poor**

_____ **Neutral**

C.2. **How likely would your department be to use this test if you were going to assess majors in political science? (CHECK ONLY ONE)**

_____ **Definitely will use it** _____ **Probably would not use.**

_____ **Probably would use.** _____ **Definitely would not use it.**

_____ **Might or might not use.**

C.2a. **Why?**_____

_____

C.3. **Which additional modules would your department be likely to use? (CHECK UP TO THREE)**

_____ **Comparative Politics** _____ **International Relations**

_____ **Political Theory and History of Political Thought** _____ **Methodology**

_____ **None**

C.4. **What is the principal advantage of Alternative 3? (CHECK ONLY ONE)**_____ **Time required**

_____ **Cost** _____ **Focus on U.S. politics** _____ **Coverage of modules available**

_____ **Choice of modules** _____ **Other** _____

C.5. **What is the major limitation of Alternative 3? (CHECK ONLY ONE)** _____ **Time required**

_____ **Cost** _____ **Focus on U. S. politics** _____ **Coverage of modules available**

_____ **Lack of full comparative data Other** _____

C.6. **What would you like to see changed or added to this approach?**

_____

_____

Alternative 2. Current Major Field Political Science Test with Optional Modules Available

This alternative would augment the present Major Field Test in Political Science (as described in Alternative 1) with a choice of three 30-minute modules in subareas of United States politics. Each module would be composed of 30 multiple-choice questions. The modules, drawn from the item bank materials, would be: 1) Institutions, Policies, and Processes; 2) Political Behavior; and 3) Constitutional Law/Judicial Process. Departments could choose to add up to two of these modules to the current test. A separate Assessment Indicator score (see Cover Sheet) would be reported for each module administered. There would be fee of $2 per module per student in addition to the base price of $14 per student tested. Only limited comparative data would be available for the modules for the first year with more complete data becoming available after subsequent use.

B.1. As a department chair, what is your overall reaction to this approach to major field assessment? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Excellent
_____ Very Good
_____ Neutral
_____ Poor
_____ Very Poor

B.2. How likely would your department be to use an optional module if you were going to assess majors in political science? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Definitely will use it.
_____ Probably would use.
_____ Might or might not use.
_____ Probably would not use.
_____ Definitely would not use it.

B.2a. Why?_____

_____

B.3. Which of the additional modules would your department most likely use? (CHECK UP TO TWO)

_____ Institutions, Policies, and Process
_____ Political Behavior
_____ Constitutional Law/ Judicial Process
_____ None of these

B.4. What is the principal advantage of Alternative 2? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Time Required
_____ Cost
_____ Additional Content Coverage
_____ Choice of Modules

Other _____

B.5. What is the major limitation of Alternative 2? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Time Required
_____ Cost
_____ Extent of Modules
_____ Choice of Modules Available
_____ Limited Comparative Data
_____ Other _____

B.6. What would you like to see changed or added to Alternative 2?

_____

_____

D. Comparison of Alternatives:

D.1. Please rank the three alternative approaches to major field assessment in order of perceived usefulness to your department (1 highest).

_____ **The current Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science (Alt. 1.)**

_____ **The current Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science with three optional modules available (Alt. 2.)**

_____ **A Major Field Achievement Test in United States Politics (90 minutes) plus a choice of modules to test another area or two (30 minutes), plus the option for the department to add other testing modules. (Alt. 3)**

D.2. If you needed to assess your majors, which alternative would you select (CHECK ONLY ONE):

_____ **The current Major Field Test in Political Science at $14. (Alternative 1.)**

_____ **The current Major Field Test in Political Science plus one of the optional modules in Alternative 2 at $14 plus $2 for the additional module. (Alternative 2.)**

_____ **The current Major Field Test in Political Science plus two of the optional modules in Alternative 2 at $14 plus $4 for two additional modules. (Alternative 2)**

_____ **The United States Politics Major Field Test with one 30-minute or two 15-minute modules at $14. (Alternative 3)**

_____ **The United States Politics Major Field Test with one 30 or two 15-minute modules plus one or more additional modules at $3 per module added. (Alternative 3)**

_____ **We would develop our own end-of-major test.**

_____ **We would use some other assessment approach. Please describe**_____

_____

_____

D.3. Do you have any other suggestions for improving major field assessment in Political Science?

_____

_____

_____

E. Background Data.

We would appreciate your taking another moment to complete the following background questions.

E.1. How many undergraduate majors in Political Science did your department graduate last year (1988-89)? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ None _____ 11-15 _____ 26-50

_____ 1-5 _____ 16-20 _____ 51-100

_____ 6-10 _____ 21-25 _____ More than 100

E.2. What areas can undergraduate Political Science majors specialize in at your institution? (CHECK ALL THAT ARE APPROPRIATE.)

_____ American Government _____ International Relations _____ Comparative Politics

_____ Political Theory _____ Public Administration _____ Public Law

_____ Public Policy _____ Quantitative/Research Methods

_____ Other (Please specify.)_____

_____ Other (Please specify.) _____

_____ Our majors do not specialize

E.3 What is the highest degree awarded in Political Science at your institution? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

_____ Bachelors Degree _____ Masters Degree _____ Doctorate Degree

E.4. Is your department currently engaged in the formal assessment of undergraduate Political Science majors?

_____ Yes (Please answer question E.5.) _____ No (Please skip to question E.6.)

E.5. How are you assessing your undergraduate majors? (CHECK ALL THAT ARE APPROPRIATE.)

_____ A department-developed multiple-choice examination

_____ A department-developed essay examination

_____ A department-developed examination with both multiple-choice and essay questions

_____ The Major Field Achievement Test in Political Science

_____ The GRE Subject Test in Political Science

_____ A senior thesis or project.

_____ Other (Please specify.)_____

E.6. Do you think your department will begin assessment of undergraduate majors in Political Science within the next two years?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain

Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope. Thank you.

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION FOUNDED 1903
1527 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 • TEL. (202) 483-2512 • FAX (202) 462-7849

December 21, 1989

Dear Colleague:

The Educational Testing Service is trying to determine whether or not political science faculty would find a customized form of the Major Field Achievement Test in political science a useful tool for assessing what undergraduate majors have learned. To this end, you are receiving a questionnaire to elicit your department's potential interest in this service. A description of the Major Field Achievement Test is also enclosed.

In the past few years, the Association has received requests from several departments for assistance in identifying instruments to assess the achievements of undergraduate political science majors. A number of states are mandating some form of assessment. In response, to these inquiries, APSA has cooperated with ETS in an effort to develop an assessment tool that allows faculty discretion over the selection of test items and/or topics. Now we are asking you to indicate whether any of the alternative tests proposed in this survey might prove useful to you.

Sincerely,

Catherine E. Rudder
Executive Director

Enclosures

JUDITH N. SHKLAR, *President*, Harvard University
THEODORE J. LOWI, *President-Elect*, Cornell University
ROBERT H. BATES, *Vice President*, Duke University
NANNERL KEOHANE, *Vice President*, Wellesley College
MICHAEL PRESTON, *Vice President*, University of Southern California
M. CRAWFORD YOUNG, *Secretary*, University of Wisconsin
DAVID BRADY, *Treasurer*, Stanford University
JANE MANSBRIDGE, *Program Chair*, Northwestern University
SAMUEL C. PATTERSON, *Managing Editor, APSR*, Ohio State University
CATHERINE E. RUDDER, *Executive Director*

APPENDIX E
OTHER UNDERGRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE SPECIALITIES

E2. What areas can undergraduate Political Science majors specialize in at your institution? Other (1)

Political Psychology Behavior (4)
BA in International Relations (3)
PreLaw (2)
BA - general (2)
Criminal Justice (2)
Specialization is not encouraged (2)
Urban Politics (2)
American & Public Policy - PA combined, as are IR Comp. (2)
Political Science History
Except for Special IR Concentration
Legal research assistant
Not required
Environmental Politics/Political Economy
BS in Policy Analysis
Professional Political Science
General, International Relations & Public Admin.
Must take General Course
Constitutional Law/Judicial Process
Two tracks: Poli Sci/Public Policy Admin.
Do not specialize (2)
Political Science - Business
Campaign management
BS - Associated requirements of 12 hours in research methods
State and Local Government
General Major without specialization

APPENDIX F
OTHER FORMS OF ASSESSING UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

E5. How are you assessing you undergraduate majors? (Other)

Senior seminar/alumni questionnaire (6)
Exit interview/surveys (2)
Research papers throughout curriculum; internship reports; projects (2)
Grade point averages and fulfillment of major requirement. (2)
Sampling with essay exams by Jr., in upper level courses
Externally evaluated
Multiple Choice exam plus essay
Self-study process for SACS
Summary evaluation
Writing portfolios
Department developed oral exam
Will institute 100 item (from subareas) this spring.
ACAT test developed by Austin Peay State U.
Assessment being developed for 1992.
Seminar plus major paper/case study requirements for all majors
State collaborative test
Placement of Graduates
Will probably use MFAT
One person department. "I assess them in class every damn day."
Office of Institutional Research.
But we'll quit GRE next year.
I cannot answer these questions (E4-E6) satisfactorily, which demonstrates the problem with multiple choice. We require 2 senior seminars as a way of assessing performance in the major. But we do not formally college and compare our students performances.
We are beginning to develop our own assessment.
Survey of graduates, activities and attitudes.
I would really like to assess this test with you personally! (Dr. Jo Formicdu, Seton Hall U.)
Don't know yet, arguing about it.
Frequency with which they enter law school or graduate school.
University devised own test.
Pre-test and post-test in various courses.
By faculty.
Outside visiting consultant.

APPENDIX G
OTHER PRINCIPAL ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVES

A3. What is the principal advantage of Alternative 1? (Other)

No advantage (2)
Cost and forces purpose
Force administration to add faculty to department
Breadth of coverage
We don't have to do it.
Reaches all students regardless of their specialization
To satisfy Middle State regarding "Outputs"
Used a similar one last year

B4. What is the principal advantage of Alternative 2? Other

No advantage (5)
Legitimate education to government assessment
Depth of testing
We would not have to worry about additional items

C4. What is the principal advantage of Alternative 3? Other

Flexibility (2)
Legitimate education to government
No advantage
Difficulty in administering
Too limited subject area

APPENDIX H
OTHER MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF ALTERNATIVES

A4. What is the major limitation of Alternative 1? (Other)

Multiple Choice test/not essay (17)
Methodology (3)
Would like coverage of public policy analysis and public administration budgeting. (3)
Fits with departmental objectives (2)
Difficulty in administering
Testing Format
Some good test questions
No advantage
Cost/Forces purpose
Assessment of writing skills; ability to develop arguments
Revised based on item analysis; some questions poorly written; too heavy emphasis on Western Europe, not global enough.
Weighing of content; item distribution by field
Difficulty in administering
Testing Format
Does not assess skills
Rigid structure
Not altogether our percent of breakdown but better than the other two.
Some modules not relevant.
Too many applicants are from outside Political Science or from Foreign countries.
Cost
The list of schools to which we are comparing ourselves is not terribly impressive.
Over emphasizes political theory/though--under emphasizes IR
Opposition to national uniform coverage.
Excessive emphasis on area students in Comprehensive Politics, rather than theory.
Additional items option good in theory, but would we use it?
Can the student think clearly and about politics.
Permits us to test public law/public administration with the 50 question program.
118 multiple choice questions make topics selected for re-elective.

APPENDIX H (cont'd)
OTHER MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF ALTERNATIVES

B5. What is the major limitation of Alternative 2? Other

Multiple choice format (9)
Focus on U.S. (7)
Methodology (2)
No advantage
Need to use Alternative 1
Still a standard test
Time, cost, extent of modules, choice of modules available, limited comparative data.
Difficult to administer
Poor way to test
Modules add little that would be of value
Too extensive
Non-customized structure
Written essays by subfield
Prefer Alternative 1 - more general
Too standardized to assess real learning
It doesn't deal with the basic problem of Alternative 1.
National uniform coverage
Basic premise
Simply would not need it.
No flexibility

APPENDIX H (cont'd)
OTHER MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF ALTERNATIVES

C5. What is the major limitation of Alternative 3? Other

Multiple Choice format (3)
Methodology
Ethrocentric bias
More cover of I.R.
Still standardized
Not suited for our program
Change focus in U.S. Politics to include other
Choice of questions especially in comparative
Poor way to test
Inflexibility in terms of tailoring to student programs
Module on Constitutional Law/Judicial Process
National Uniform coverage
I do not see why I.R. and Methodology have only 15 minutes.

APPENDIX I
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALTERNATIVES

A5. What would you like to see change or added to Alternative 1?

Reduce Time/Cost per test (9)
Needs Essay Questions (6)
More I.R. questions (6)
Other tests--e.g., Public Administration (5)
Make optional ten methodology section (4)
More balances of items between fields (4)
Constitutional Law/Judicial Process (4)
More sub-field coverage--for example: Public Law/Administration (4)
Delete Methodology -- which is not comprehended by the curriculum (3)
Reduce Methodology (3)
Non-Multiple choice items (3)
Item Bank (2)
Allow flexibility on testing in areas a department cannot cover (2)
Assessment indicators in Public Administration and Public Law (2)
Different balance -- too much U.S. Politics (2)
Too heavy on History of Political Thought and areas we don't teach, such as Latin America. (2)
We feature urban politics and public policy and de-emphasize methodology (2)
Need to see exam. Would discuss with colleagues, we prefer essays. (2)
More generalized information, we found the section on political theory, specifically, too specialized. (2)

Develop optional modules (that could yield comparative data) in public law (Const. Law, Judicial Process) in Public administration. (2)

The weakness of public administration/public policy on the test is a problem. But the possibility of writing up additional questions is helpful.

More department input.
Need some alternatives
More comparative, less history and political thought more methods.
Module on non-western government and politics?
Alternative 2 look like a better choice
Ill advised direction to pursue.
Research design component
Expression component and current events component.

Forget it!
Balance of questions to reflect courses taken by students rather than what the Professors think the questions should be.
The subfields of Alternative 2 are appealing
Delete methods indicator, decrease comparative and increase theory.
Have a major field test in International studies.
No public law.
No multiple choice exam would be acceptable. We agree totally with Jacques Barzun's comments on "Multiple Choice Flunks Out" in the New York Times, Tuesday 10/11/88.

The list of schools to which we are comparing ourselves is not to impressive. We are currently deciding to use this test or to design our own. This short relatively cheap test is the only alternative which is attractive to us.

Education should not be measured by multiple choice.
Different questions--either more in line with our program, or in some cases, more precise/accurate.
Viable choices
We would prefer Alternative 1 to 2 or 3, but might use the IPP module of #2, depending on its content.
U.S. Government and theory should be increased slightly at the expense of the other three categories.
Allow department essay questions.
Add state and local government as separate section.
Eliminate trivial questions
Choice to select topic areas
Measure and analytical and creative capability
Report assessment indicator regardless if fewer than 10 students tested.
Pre-test for incoming majors.
Add content modules.
Alternative questions.
Public law as subfield
Add a component on African American Politics.

APPENDIX I (cont'd)
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALTERNATIVES

B6. What would you like to see changed or added to Alternative 2?

Modules with a comparative politics/international relations emphasis (8)
Public Administration (8)
Add a section on Political Economy (3)
Format (3)
Essay test and short answers (2)
More modules (2)
Item Bank
Change
Questions that deal with serious issues in the discipline.
Sub-divide behavior and institutions
Flexibility on testing in areas a department cannot cover.
Allow department to add module(s) based on individual student emphasis area, that would have certain amount of customization.
Political Behavior - general topic compared to other two.
Some essay - writing by students
Other fields
Develop additional modules
Content of modules not clear
A geography module and/or information about non-western cultures and religions
Something on formal theory and methodology
Flexibility
Eliminate methodology for those of us who don't teach it.
Policy
Ill advised direction to pursue.
Comparative data
We feature urban politics and public policy and de-emphasize methodology.
Senior research paper and/or comprehensive exam.
Multiple choice not a good indicator of knowledge.
Wider range of modules--beyond US alone, opportunity for local questions.
Essay answers, if not feasible, possibly hypothetical situations emphasizing reasoning, analytical skills, etc.
Addition of choice
Some essays, perhaps similar to the Advanced Placement exams.
Over emphasis on American Politics.
Make more like Alternative 3.
Modules for every area.
Inclusion of Non-Western and Politics Module.
Retention of the fifty locally generated questions option.

APPENDIX I (cont'd)
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALTERNATIVES

C6. What would you like to see changed or added to this approach?

Module on Public Administration (6)
Add essay questions (5)
Public Law modules (3)
Modules of equal length (in Pol. Theory, American Politics, including constitutional law--without additional cost. (2)
More coverage of IR? Public Law/Judicial Process either U.S. Module (2)
Cost/Time (2)
4-15 min. modules
Offer other type questions
Would not serve needs
Focus on theory in each area
Too narrow
Let students pick modules individually
Addition of 15 min. comparative pol. & 15 min. Political theory, IR
Module on State & Urban Politics
International Law
Return to inclusion of "modules" into basic test
Use Am. Politics base but individualize the additional modules to reflect the areas students selected for concentration in structuring major.
Matching international Relations with methodology in cost structure inhibits using only one, make this separate.
Make one with international studies exam.
Add more on U.S. government
We feature urban politics and public policy and de-emphasize methodology.
Too focused on American Politics
Broaden
A National security policy module.
Multiple choice not good indicator of knowledge.
It is unfortunate that you have not been able to develop a question bank.
A political behavior module would be useful to us.
Opportunity for local questions--Longer international relations
Possibility of crossing greater number of modules.
We object to this narrow approach P.S. You need to cover at least 5 subarea list in Alternative 1.
Do an I.R. version
A non-Western Government and Politics module included.

APPENDIX J
OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT

D3. Do you have any other suggestions for improving major field assessment in P.S.

Need essay (9)
Offer option of locally generated add-ons (5)
Cover Publ. Admin. (3)
Do an International studies exam. (3)
Item Bank idea for customization of assessment instrument. (3)
Ability to use knowledge of acts learned; the ability to think like a trained political scientist? (2)
Equal weight to comp. Pol., methods, IR and Theory (2)
Scrap the whole idea, leave up to individual univ., stress conceptual and ethical issues. (2)
Reduce the cost (4)
Need special exam in Pub. Admin. (2)
Broaden. (2)
Certainly not to restrict it to U.S. politics.
More modules
Carefully constructed senior seminar to be required of all majors.
Construct module tests of equal length in each of the fields, let student/depart. choose combinations they wish. Our majors choose their own emphasis (3 out of 4 field) from American, Theory, I.R.'s, and Comparative.
Please design an international students test for us to consider.
As indicated, we are mostly concerned with the cross-institution comparisons and believe that at present the list does not contain sufficient range of quality in institutions.
Drop the idea it is terrible!
Find a method that assess the use and expression of knowledge, and provides written response to analytical questions. Actually, your very much out-of-date.
If you are going to a choice format, you need to allow enough choice to cover most cases. These alternatives simply do not do that.
Test with increased IR and an Economic Section.
We like the possibility of adding some local questions but worry about the national norming of such items.
Need pre-test and post test to help ascertain how much the P.S. dept. has contributed to the student's knowledge.
No demand for standardized test.
What is the status of public policy--a part of U.S. or does it now merit its own module?
Would only do it if required by administration
Don't do it this way; why must there be one standard; etc.
Add a non-Wester Gov't Module
Continue to work on Item Bank
Not good for Pub. Admin. student
Depts. should concentrate on improving curriculum, teaching Y exam in courses

D3. (cont'd)

Be certain that the assumption, goals, and standards underlying each part of the exam are clearly set out.
Ability to assess alternatives, develop arguments and the like.
Not so much reliance on multiple choice, would like to see some analytical and creative capabilities.
Better departmental control of assessment
Public Admin. Module.
Alternative 2 would be helpful with one of these modules
Report assessment indicators for each student, even if fewer than 10 students tested.
Improve questions, too many reply on opinion.
Reduce emphasis on political economy.
There is a need for a Pretest and the test listed.
Make sure subfields (modules) scores are reported.

APPENDIX K
OTHER MEANS OF ASSESSING MAJORS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

D2. If you needed to assess your majors, which alternative would you select?

Essay exam (3)
Own test or some other assessment would have to think about it. (2)
Capstone course with reading and paper requirements (2)
Modules of current test from which we construct test
Senior Comp exam/with essay question in 4 fields plus objective test.
Close supervision of independent research.
Survey of graduates asking them to assess the value of their education in P.S. majors.
Oral exams
Current system, course grade and GRE
Comprehensive exam, course exam, and 3 research papers, qualitative exit interviews & surveys
Some approach that tests critical thinking skills and problem solving would be our goal.
Question on I.R. & Comp Politics
Curriculum taken by major: questionnaire administered to majors
Combination of alternatives: Test; Senior Seminar and Honors Seminar
Combination of essays, multiple choice and presentation.
It would be an essay approach, multiple choice do not elicit real learning.
Might be in part self developed
Instructions too complicated and long at start of exam, this could be more efficient.
Measure behavioral change of major, comprehensive exams with 1,3 & 5 year follow-up of graduates.
We will be developing our own test, despite the fact that this will not permit cross institutional comparisons.
The major weakness we see in this approach has been the lack of a section on public administration/public policy.
Reading student papers and tests. Talking to the, We know our seniors very well after 4 years.

APPENDIX L
REASONS FOR LIKELIHOOD OF USE

A2 - How likely would your department be to use this test (current Major Field Achievement Test) if you were going to assess majors in political science?
A.2a. WHY

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Content Coverage (14)	Cost (13)	Not appropriate for curriculum/content coverage (21)
Comparative data (9)	Still considering several options (5)	Will not use multiple choice exam (24)
University requires comprehensive test - majors must pass before graduation (4)	Objective test questions (4)	Cost/Time (5)
Convenience (4)	Currently exploring alternatives (4)	Too heavy emphasis on theory (2)
Assessment pressures (3)	Many applicants are from outside Political Science or from Foreign countries. (3)	It doesn't measure how to think creatively (2)
SASC requires (3)	Risks of political use of results in a state that is assessment-crazy. Risks of teaching to the test. (2)	Prefer current method (2)
Simplicity (2)	Convenience (2)	Too general (2)
Objective - non-college instruments helpful to know background of political science. (2)	More attention to International Relations (2)	No interest at this time (2)
State requires accountability-MFAT under consideration as <u>one</u> indicator (2)	Not sure of institutional requirements and funding or of alternate tests (2)	Offer own oral/essay exam
Cost factor might prohibit (2)	Would need to see actual test (2)	Discipline based test not of use Reflects bias of "mainstream" of discipline
Would use if other alternatives were not available (2)	Economy of effort are in-house	Other options being considered
Test would help us assess effectiveness of our instructional program. (2)		Infringes on Academic freedom
		Little agreement concerning what constitutes Political Science
		Will not do it until mandated

Convenient and good reputation (2)

Availability (2)

Would do Job

Provides barometer for Department Teaching effectiveness

External validity/math comparison

Need additional information

Governing Board requires test with National Norms

Useful to assess majors and to people who want to exempt course

Presently using test developed by Austin Peay Univ.

Who Pays

Familiarity

No definitive position in the department on assessment tests

If cost is not great

If we went to an assessment program we would need a solid, standardized test for comparative purposes.

We are using it (used once) and deciding what to do in the future

Over emphasizes political theory/thought -- under

Some dissatisfaction with some questions

Could meet requirements for outcome measure
Assess level of information of majors compared to other schools

Hard to know quality of questions -- ETS makes copies available under overly restrictive conditions

No courses/faculty in political theory and coverage of methodology is weak

Needs assessment to identify requirement for use

Institution is pursing for assessment instrument

No need at this time

Need to compare with ACAT currently used

Created own instruments - must test before we decide

Content coverage

Funding by University

May be required to assess against nationally normed test

Does not include items on Public Administration/Public Policy

Not sure of testing as a major method of assessment

Does not really assess learning in more than superficial manner

Pedagogical philosophy

No required distribution that would be needed

Biased against international relations as a provision U.S. Govt.

Using external examiners; would be added burden on students

Testing shapes curriculum

Institution does not user comprehensive end of major exams

Small number of students

Evaluations made course by course

Not comfortable with "recall of content" type of testing as outcome measure.

Prefer essay comprehensive exams
Need a comparison with national norms, but not this one.

Apples and oranges

We offer a minor but not a major in Political Science

Faculty may prefer to develop own instrument

I looked at it, questions too picky.

emphasizes international relations

An assessment instrument has been suggested for all majors at L.O.C.

Want to test across full range of areas

Flexibility - use of 50 additional questions from the department

We've been leaders in assessment; so we appreciate your willingness to work with us.

Assess the cumulative knowledge of the field.

University is promoting outcomes assessment.

Too much fact and not enough ideas

LSAT preferred

Not flexible enough

Need to see exam/test first

Monitoring and assessment

College adopted it, so we're in.

Multiple choice questions are a poor substitute for analytical essays.

For the past year, an intense effort has be underway to test our students with essay assignments. We in the Political Science departments have been doing this for 23 years.

Depends on results of an outcomes committee study.

Broad in scope; departmental freedom. Negatives: too much emphasis on comparative and methodology

Political Science, as a major field, is growing in enrollments at the undergraduate level. Most regard it as a public service or pre-law program.

Time

A somewhat too shallow basis for assessment

Our majors would be interested in 3 sections: IR, Comp. Polic., and Methodology

No public law for pre-law majors we attract

Only a few majors don't feel intellectual sorting is useful

The approach defeats the purpose of higher education in the liberal arts

We feature urban politics and public policy and de-emphasize methodology

No pressure to do so

Some questions ambiguous

We used the ETS pilot in year 1. Disappointed in content of items (often descriptive/idio-syncratic/discrete information rather than patterns) and, re: coverage, far too heavy on normative political theory, far too light on international. Weaknesses speak to changes we prefer.
We felt the test did not effectively measure or grasp concepts, idealogies, reasoning, etc.

We are most probably not going to assess major in this way.

Faculty would not support a major field test

Fee majors at present
Not sure this test would be an accurate measurement of our people

I don't believe in this process

The university wants us to assess our own majors

Structure does not fit our curriculum

Along with other criteria; senior research paper, comprehensive and exam at 4th year.

Department needs to achieve consensus on the justification for such a test

We have developed our own evaluation system, fitted to both major and liberal arts.

I reviewed an actual test and it was loaded with comparative--esp. Latin American questions.

Currently we offer little comparative theory or methodology.

We would probably require an institutional commitment.

We do not have methodology, this would lower scores.

Would need to examine impact in department.

Not useful at this time.

We reviewed an earlier version.

APPENDIX L (cont'd)
REASONS FOR LIKELIHOOD OF USE

B2. How likely would your department be to use an additional optional module if you were going to assess majors in political science? Why?

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Flexibility (4)	Cost/Time (8)	Too focused on U.S. Politics (17)
Reflects curriculum better/coverage (2)	Constitutional Law attractive for Pre-Law, other modules not relevant to program (4)	Limited course offerings (11)
Convenience (2)	Would depend on content. (2)	Cost/Time (8)
Constitutional Law & Judicial Process requirement part of curriculum. (2)	Need to see actual test. (2)	Multiple Choice (17)
Constitutional Law & Political Behavior	Administration skeptical about standardized tests. (2)	Too specialized in sub-disciplines (5)
Our department focuses mainly on module.	Needs assessment to identify requirements. (2)	Offer own oral/essay exam. (4)
Based on Cost, this would be a "cheap way" to evaluate our U.S. Gov't program.	Do not like multiple choice testing (2)	Alternative 1 is sufficient (3)
Use in classes only	Modules would better mirror program emphasis (2)	Additional fields not very useful (2)
To be thorough.	1) Would have to see whether questions are well constructed and 2) would prefer range of modules beyond U.S.	No need at this time. (2)
Compared to present test, would be helpful.	Greater strengths in advanced areas of U.S. Politics makes this generally more appealing.	Overloaded on one area (2)
Show how strong pre-law majors are in constitutional law/judicial process	Department may feel data not useful.	Too narrow (2)
Too much emphasis on methodology.		Does not suit our emphasis or approach. (2)
Cover a broader base in our		Does not assess learning (2)
		Small number of students (2)
		Our major is International studies. (2)
		Pedagogical Philosophy

discipline and make provisions for adding content modules.

Univ. System requirements

Institutional pressure.

If we went to an assessment program, we would need a solid, standardized test for comparative purposes.

A majority of our undergraduates in P.S. majors regard the program as a preparation for domestic public services or pre-law school. The faculty regards it as a means to enhance capability of an attentive public.

To obtain additional information upon which to base on evaluation of individual students.

Comparative politics of equal importance in our curriculum, would be under-represented.

Heavy stress on U.S. Politics.

No consensus among department faculty as to value and cost effectiveness of such tests.

Few majors at present.

I don't believe i this process.

Coverage in option 1 probably adequate.

Department needs to achieve consensus on the justification for such a test.

Should be essay style.

Flexibility

We have a generalists major, about 36 semester hours.

There must be an outlet to allow questions pertinent to the teaching in a specific department.

While this approach may be valid for some, I don't fee that the three areas listed are particularly under-represented.

Risks a political use of results in a state that is assessment crazy. Risks of teaching to the test.

Modules not central to major.

Seems too specific for a baccalaureate program.

We don't require all the courses.

This approach defeats the purpose of Higher Education in the Liberal Arts.

We feature Urban Politics and public policy and de-emphasize methodology.

No pressure to do so.

Not likely to improve much on Alternative 1.

We are looking for a comprehensive, broad exam.

Modules don't mach our specifications.

Do not plan on using Major Field test.

We could cover the material in Option 1 modules, and move in the "additional" 50 items in Alternative 1.

We are probably not going to assess majors in this way.

Not flexible enough.

Lack of interest within department.

Would need to examine impact in department.

Would use in the absence of something better.

Specific modules may not be appropriate for our students.

Not at the stage to determine our exact needs.

Would provide a goal or target for seniors.

Must see exam/test first.

Monitoring and assessment

If students could choose their own optional modules.

This is better than the first one, but have developed our own instrument based on the courses we offer in our program.

I'm not sure what the content of the modules would be compared with the MFAT.

Not thrilled with base

Public Policy, Public Administration

Eliminate trivial questions.

Not broad enough

Pattern of courses taught in department.

Don't like multiple choice tests.

Curriculum is more accurately represented in the current MFAT.

Not needed for assessment requirements.

Testing shapes curriculum.

Institution does not use comprehensive end of major exams.

Too particularized for our undergraduate curriculum.

Evaluations made course by course

Don't like the conceptual organization

I looked at it, questions so picky.

Not comfortable with "recall of content" testing

Apples and oranges

No major in Political Science.

Not well suited to the diverse structure possible in the major programs. Items seemed inappropriate for general assessment.

Our students emphasis

Discipline based test not of much use.

Do not meet our needs

Depends on whether module(s) can be added on individual basis to fit each student's emphasis area, rather than blanket coverage.

Don't have masters, Ph.D. program

Need measure of accrediting process

Variety of sub-areas--may be difficult to administer.

Creating own instrument

Department too small for this degree of specificity

Unclear of content.

Need to compare with other methods of assessment.

Developed own evaluation system.

Not all of our students take courses in each of the modules.

Reflects bias of the mainstream of discipline

Public Administration

Prefer current method

Faculty may prefer to develop own instrument.

APPENDIX L (cont'd)
REASONS FOR LIKELIHOOD OF USE

C2a. How likely would your department be to use this test (U.S. Politics focus with additional maodules) if you were going to assess majors in political science? Why

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Focus on U.S. Politics (6)	Cost/Time (6)	Too focused on U.S. (47)
Best suits our needs (2)	Too much emphasis on U.S. Politics (2)	Multiple Choice (10)
Flexible (2)	No modules on State & Local, Public Admin., Public Policy. (2)	Length (4)
Reasonably assess areas of student (2)	Allows test to be tailored to what dept. offers, but maintains level of generality. (2)	Cost (4)
Coverage (2)	Focus of review is student satisfaction currently.	No need at this time (3)
Allows students to demonstrate an area of specialty.	Has the flexibility to match curriculum better than the other options.	Too little Int. Rel. emphasis (3)
It would provide feedback to instructors concerning material covered or omitted.	Under emphasis on data I.R.	Structure does not fit our curriculum (2)
Good base and modules.	No provision for local questions.	Offer own oral/essay exam (2)
Too Broad	No provision of U.S. politics into modules as in Alt.2	Students required to take courses across the discipline. (2)
If we were to drop state test Because methodology appear to be eliminated	Would need to examine impact in dept.	Biased to standardized test. (2)
University system policy	More flexible that Alter.1. The full package would be more comprehensive than Alter. 1.	Test Format (2)
Too Narrow		Prefer current method (2)
Comprehensive		To complex (2)
Convenience and good reputation		Too particularized (2)
		Inferior to Alternative 1. (2)
		Not certain yet if we would use a standardized test or construct our own. (2)

Broader ability to fit test to curriculum.

Would it have equal validity? Could better represent offerings in our limited dept.
I want what the students have studied -- FACT.

Multiple choice questions are a poor substitute for analytical essays.

Flexibility

I still favor using an internally developed test, but an outside instrument in addition might be useful.

No assessment as to value of such tests.

Fee majors at present.

Need to see actual test.

We don't like the choice of modules.

If we go to standardized test, we would use them in survey course and precede from there.

Department needs to achieve consensus for the justification for such at test.

We are eliminating course concentrations next year to create a broader understanding of government.

Might use without additional modules.

Reflects bias

Major program is comprehensive, not just U.S. Politics plus add-ons.

Ethnocentric

Pedagogical Philosophy

To include IR must pair with methodology or add to basic test.

Testing shapes curriculum.

Like general approach better

Focus too narrow. A substantial minority of our undergraduate majors have need for assessment in areas covered by Alternative 1.

Does not access Learning

Objective test

We prefer a short and general exam.

This approach defeats the purpose of Higher Education in the Liberal Arts.

We feature urban politics & public policy and de-emphasize methodology.

We would want the benefit of coverage in Alternative 1.

Current plan with optional module seems preferable.

Too Specialized

Need assessment to identify reason for use.
Consistent with curriculum

Need a measure

Institutional requirements and funding

Creating own instrument

Not sure of testing as a method for assessment

Must see test/exam first

Monitoring and Assessment

Test needs to be essay

Do not use Standardized test

Alternative 1 preferred.

Cast of coverage, though I like the depth and ability to construct our own exam.

More comparative data.

Institution does not use comprehensive end of major exams.

Small number of students

Our emphasis is cross-cultural

Don't like weighing.

Not comfortable with "recall of content" testing

Opposition in department

Apples and oranges

Proposed format still to rigid. Use of Amer. Politics as base is not bad, but modules should vary with student program of study. Our students do not proceed in a look step fashion.

Admissions officer handles this.

I looked at it, questions too picky.

Too limited for a general baccalaureate program.

Might use expanded supplements

Unbalanced for our curriculum.